

The Extra Mile

Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices
to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms

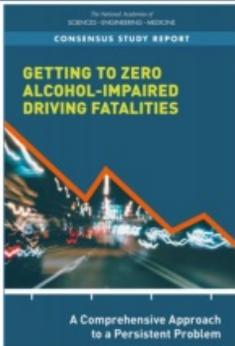
MILES TO GO: A much-needed community conversation about DUIs in Nebraska

Key stakeholders gather to address a persistent problem

The Project Extra Mile (PEM) coalition meeting on January 23rd featured an important community conversation about the ongoing DUI problem in Nebraska. The discussion was prompted by concerned community members who described themselves as being "fed up" with the high rates of DUI fatalities in the Omaha metro area. They wanted to bring key stakeholders to the table to have a frank discussion about what more can be done locally and statewide to prevent these senseless tragedies.

PEM Executive Director Chris Wagner noted that data shows Omaha and the rest of Nebraska has a serious DUI problem with our state being the [2nd worst state in the country with regard to self-reported drinking and driving](#). Since 2010, the number of annual alcohol-related traffic fatalities in Omaha has increased by 50%, due in large part to the fact that Omaha is the 25th worst city in the U.S. for binge drinking.

Wagner also presented the public policies which are recommended by the [National Academies](#) and the [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) based on strong evidence that they effectively prevent and reduce this problem. (His full presentation is available [here](#).)



- Increasing Alcohol Taxes
- Dram Shop Liability Without Caps
- Screening, Brief Intervention, & Referral to Treatment
- Regulating Outlet Density
- All Offender Ignition Interlock Laws
- Universal Primary Seatbelt Laws
- Regulation of Alcohol Marketing
- Maintaining Limits on Days and Hours of Sale
- Enhanced Enforcement of Laws Prohibiting Sales to Minors
- Sobriety Checkpoints
- High-visibility enforcements
- 0.05% BAC Laws

 The Community Guide

 projectextramile
PREVENTING ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM

One solution suggested by coalition members was instituting stricter punishments for the first instance of a DUI. While tough DUI laws certainly have a role in deterring DUIs, we must also understand that the average impaired driver drives [between 200-2,000 times before being caught](#). The fact that so many DUIs can happen prior to an arrest means policy makers need to focus on preventing these through population-level policies. Even when a DUI offender is caught, their experience tells them they can do it again with a very low probability of being pulled over.

Participating organizations at the meeting also discussed their current activities to prevent and reduce DUIs. While many agencies and organizations are doing good work in this area (including through education, law enforcement, prosecution, etc.), current statistics show that much more needs to be done.

The coalition will revisit this issue for its June 12 meeting to ensure that the conversation continues. In the meantime, PEM staff will push for innovative strategies, explore more evidence-based solutions, and connect with key partners to maintain momentum on the issue.

Toward that end, the next PEM Law Enforcement Work Group will explore a range of solutions, including the formation of a Douglas County DUI Task Force (modeled on that in Sarpy County), increased use of [sobriety checkpoints](#), [place of last drink \(POLD\) investigations & enforcement](#), and increased [underage drinking enforcement](#).

There are also policy solutions within our grasp. A number of bills introduced in the Nebraska legislature this session can help by raising alcohol taxes, creating alcohol impact zones to regulate outlet density, and creating a statewide 24/7 sobriety program. At the same time, others have been introduced that would hinder efforts to prevent DUIs, including lowering alcohol taxes, allowing first time DUI offenders to be eligible for pretrial diversion. Local governments can also regulate existing alcohol outlets through their land use and zoning powers like the City of Omaha with its Good Neighbor Ordinance.

In closing, we look forward to working with advocates across the state to reduce DUIs and save lives. A special thanks goes to the community partners that participated in last month's meeting, including

- Burlington Road Neighborhood Association;
- Gifford Park Neighborhood Association;
- Nebraska Attorney General's Office;
- Douglas & Sarpy County Attorney's Offices;
- Nebraska State Patrol;
- Douglas & Sarpy County Sheriff's Offices;
- Omaha, Papillion, & Ralston Police Departments;
- Nebraska Parole Board;
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA);
- NDOT Highway Safety Office;
- Omaha Mayor's Office;
- City of Omaha;
- NE Safety Council;
- Drive Smart Nebraska;
- MADD Nebraska;
- Sarpy County DUI Task Force;
- Sarpy County Diversion;
- Nebraska Dept. of Health and Humans Services;
- Methodist Health System;
- Nebraska Broadcasters Association
- Know the Truth.



Proposals seek to increase Nebraska alcohol taxes

More expensive alcohol means fewer harms

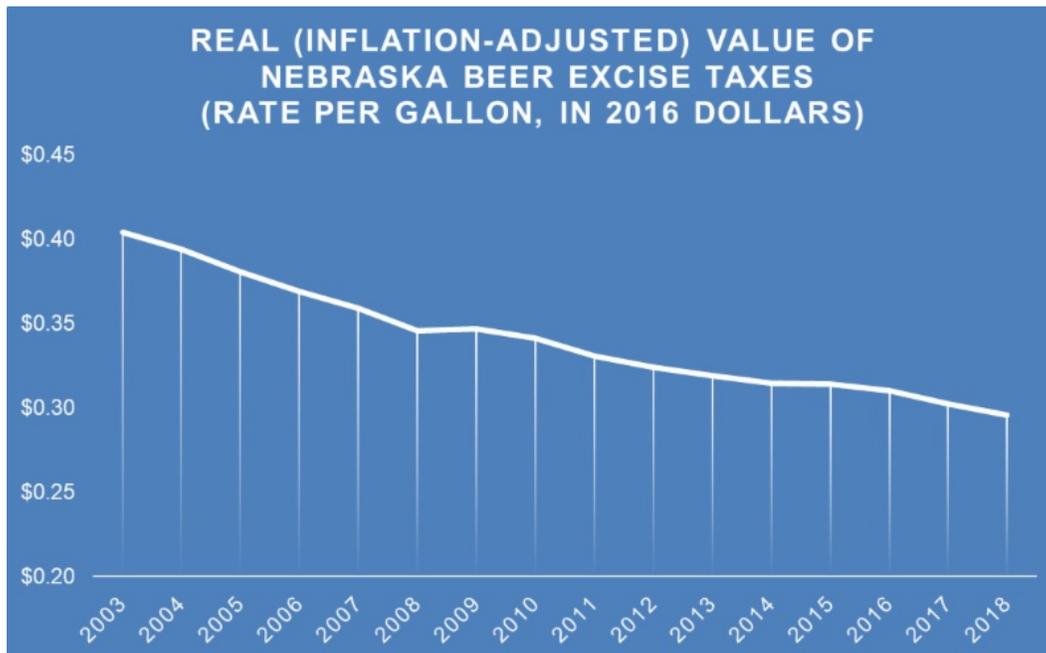
Several bills in this legislative session (LB 314, LB 497, & LB 614) feature measures to fund education and reduce the property tax burden faced by Nebraska families, individuals and businesses. One of the elements of those bills is an increase to alcohol excise tax rates.

Increasing alcohol taxes offers the best chance in years to achieve legislative progress in reducing alcohol-related harms in our state. [We would encourage Nebraskans to testify in support of increasing alcohol taxes in LB 314 and LB 497 on Thursday, February 14 at 12:30 p.m. in Room 1524.](#) If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may e-mail a letter in support by **5 p.m. tomorrow, February 13th to Chairwoman Linehan** at llinehan@leg.ne.gov.

Here are a few key facts about alcohol taxes in Nebraska to consider as the industry pushes their message into the media:

1. Statistics show that **Nebraska suffers from a substantial burden of alcohol-related harm**. This includes an estimated 703 deaths in 2015 alone from alcohol-related causes and over [1,600 alcohol-involved car crashes per year](#), with half of those resulting in injury or death.

2. **Alcohol excise taxes have not been increased in Nebraska since 2003**. Because these taxes are not indexed to inflation, they are effectively losing value every year in terms of real dollars.



3. The federal government instituted a [massive cut in federal alcohol excise taxes](#) in December 2017 - at the behest of the craft brewing and distilling lobbies - despite the warnings of many [policy groups and public health experts](#). This means that **overall alcohol taxes are at historically low levels**.

4. **Current tax rates do not even begin to offset the immense [\\$1.2 billion in alcohol-related health and social costs](#) borne by Nebraska citizens every year.**

That amounts to \$1.61 in costs for every drink consumed in our state.

Contrast that figure with the tiny amount raised by our current alcohol taxes (about 3¢ a drink for beer, about 4¢ cents per drink for wine and liquor). In contrast, **LB 314 and LB 497 would increase these taxes to \$0.10 per drink.**



This is the amount of money the state of Nebraska currently collects (in alcohol excise taxes) for every standard drink of beer.

Furthermore, those costs include damage to Nebraska businesses due to reduced workplace productivity. In fact, according to the CDC, [alcohol-related reduced workplace productivity is the single biggest cost category](#), accounting for

72% of the overall alcohol-related cost burden. Nebraska businesses that do not rely on the sales of alcohol are in effect subsidizing alcohol-based businesses.

5. **The scientific evidence is overwhelming** that increasing the price of alcohol through tax rate adjustments helps reduce a host of alcohol-related harms, including [alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes](#), [alcohol-related hospitalizations](#), [sexually transmitted infections](#), [liver cirrhosis](#), [child abuse](#), [other violence](#), [overall crime](#), and other health and social harms.

Because of this evidence, alcohol tax increases are strongly recommended by key expert organizations, including the [American Medical Association](#); the [National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine](#); the [American Public Health Association](#); the [American Society of Clinical Oncology](#); the [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#); the [Trust for America's Health](#); the [World Health Organization](#); and many, many other groups.

6. Despite the claims to the contrary, **alcohol tax increases do NOT harm alcohol-focused businesses** in any meaningful way (see below).

All in all, the evidence shows that increasing alcohol taxes in our state makes a lot of sense for the citizens, taxpayers and businesses of Nebraska.

Setting the Record Straight on Alcohol Taxes, Part 5

Don't believe the alcohol industry - higher alcohol taxes are not "job-killers"

Every Nebraskan cares about job creation in our state. It is for this reason that the alcohol industry promotes booze-centered economic development as a kind of magic formula for job creation, both in urban areas and hard-hit rural communities. The industry also uses that claim to fend off public policies that they don't like, characterizing them as "job-killers." They have been especially quick to use that argument when faced with tax increases.

But does alcohol industry PR match up with reality? No and here's why:

1. Lessons from history and other states

When the federal government planned to institute an increase federal alcohol excise taxes in 1991 (the last time it did so), the alcohol industry and its allies claimed that job losses would be devastating.

What happened? There was actually a **net increase** in jobs related to the alcohol industry, as [the Center for Science in the Public Interest reported](#).

Similarly, there has been no evidence that alcohol tax increases damaged the job market of alcohol industry sectors in states that have raised alcohol taxes considerably in the last twenty years - including Alaska, Illinois, and Maryland.

2. Looking at the big picture

A [2017 peer-reviewed study](#) utilizing a regional macroeconomic simulation model determined that alcohol tax increases (both excise tax and sales tax) led to increases in net employment.

By contrast, the claims of massive job losses made by the alcohol industry do not appear to be based on any systematic economic analysis.

3. Who bears the "burden"

While the alcohol industry acts as though they are the bearing the costs of alcohol

excise tax increases entirely, they actually tend to overshift increases in those taxes, that is they raise prices over and above the amount of the tax increase. An economic analysis [study in 2016](#) showed how this happens specifically with state beer taxes, with each 10-cent increase in beer taxes raising retail prices by about 17 cents.

Despite industry complaints that they absorb the increases, many sectors of the industry actually find ways to benefit from these tax hikes by increasing revenues.

Again, as with other alcohol myths we have explored, the claims of the alcohol industry do not square with the facts. Alcohol tax increases are good public policy, plain and simple.



NEWS BRIEFS



Sobriety 24/7 Programs

An innovative approach to a persistent problem

As Nebraska and its neighboring states continue to struggle with high rates of alcohol-impaired car crashes, the 24/7 Sobriety Program pioneered in South Dakota has shown a lot of promise.

The program works by requiring individuals charged or convicted of alcohol-involved offenses to submit to breathalyzer tests twice per day, or wear a continuous alcohol monitoring bracelet. Those testing positive for alcohol consumption are subject to "swift, certain, and modest" sanctions (typically time in the county jail) that increase with each positive test.

Initial research has found the program to be quite effective. A [comprehensive evaluation](#) found strong evidence that the 24/7 program reduced the incidence of repeat DUI and domestic violence arrests, and it provided suggestive evidence that it may have reduced reported traffic crashes involving men aged 18 to 40 years.

Although the program focuses on individual-level sanctions, there are early indications that scaling up the program would bring population-level benefits. [Nicosia and colleagues](#) compared the program introduction and county-level mortality, and found the program to be associated with a reduction in all-cause adult mortality, especially among women and people older than 40. The strongest associations were with circulatory disorders.

[Douglas County Corrections has run a 24/7 Sobriety Program](#), modeled after South Dakota's, with great results. While most program participants are charged with felony DUI offenses, it can be applied for any alcohol-related offense. During an average of fourteen months post-program duration, Douglas County's DUI recidivism rate among 24/7 program participants is 3.1%.

Based on initial research, the 24/7 Sobriety Program is a promising alternative for preventing DUI recidivism.



Photo by Jiri Hera/Fotolia via RAND

SCOTUS & State Alcohol Policies

The January 23rd edition of the Washington Post featured a [letter to the editor by public health attorney Elyse Grossman](#) addressing the legal challenge to Tennessee liquor store owner residency rules currently being heard by the [Supreme Court of the U.S.](#)

Grossman, who additionally co-wrote an amicus curiae brief submitted in this case on behalf of the U.S. Alcohol Policy Alliance, makes clear that the case in Tennessee is not merely a squabble among different sectors of the alcohol trade.

While post-Repeal alcohol policies can often seem to be centered on technical issues, they were put in place after Prohibition expressly because states did not want to see the return of the alcohol trade abuses that had led to alarmingly high rates of alcohol-related health and social harms. Instead, these policies were set up to ensure an [orderly, restrained alcohol market](#) that valued health and positive social values.

The current rush to deregulate state alcohol policies is a guarantee that the current rise in alcohol-related death and disability will continue or even worsen.

As Grossman states, "These regulations reduce consumption and thus the incidence of adverse health consequences, including sickness and death."





February 2019
Law Enforcement Training
Controlled Underage Party Dispersal

In partnership with the Nebraska Department of Transportation - Highway Safety Office, Project Extra Mile and the Monument Prevention Coalition are coordinating two Law Enforcement Trainings, which will be held in both the Omaha area and in Scottsbluff. The trainings will focus on preventing and reducing alcohol-related harms through Controlled Underage Party Dispersal. Law enforcement representatives, prosecutors and community coalition members are encouraged to attend. Click [here](#) to register. The deadline is February 22, 2019.



**Omaha Metro
Coalition
Meeting**

Wednesday
February 13, 2019
9:00 a.m.

For more information:
(402) 963-9047
www.projectextramile.org
info@projectextramile.org



Please join us for
Coffee and Conversation
as we welcome



Jeff Soukup,
Nebraska DHHS Program Manager

to discuss how the tobacco control movement's
evidence-based strategy is a model for alcohol.

Thank you for your involvement!

Jennifer Pollock
Jennifer Pollock, Coalition Chair

MEETING LOCATION:
National Safety Council
Lower Level
11620 M Circle, Omaha NE
Use Lower Level, West Entrance

